



Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____,

Missouri's early intervention system, known as First Steps, provides services for families and very young children. System Points of Entry (SPOE's) are located throughout the state of Missouri to ensure that First Steps is visible and easily accessible by families and referral sources. (Insert local SPOE information) is your local SPOE; you may contact them at (insert SPOE phone number).

Referrals from NICU's are particularly important for those children with early-diagnosed conditions, or who are presenting with newborn conditions. As one of the federally required referral sources for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), we want to be sure that you are supported to make referrals easily to your local SPOE and that you continue to be informed and involved in service planning as appropriate. As you may be aware, federal and state regulations require that a referral is made within two working days from when you become aware of a child who may be eligible for the First Steps system. Missouri's eligibility criteria are on the reverse side to assist with your identification of children who may be eligible. Please do not defer a referral if you are unsure of the child's potential eligibility. Local SPOE's are responsible to work closely with each NICU to facilitate eligibility and coordinate closely with discharge planning.

Enclosed is a Referral Form, which has been designed to facilitate early referrals of potentially eligible infants from NICU's. Please provide as much information as is currently available and mail or fax completed referral forms to the SPOE covering the community in which the individual child and family lives. To facilitate referrals to local communities, you will find a list of SPOE's on our website at http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divspeced/FirstSteps/fsSPOEmap_regions.html. In addition, you may call First Steps toll free at 1-866-583-2392 to make inquiries or place referrals.

You will receive a response to your referral, providing you with an update on the status of the referral. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,